

RODNEY DAVIS  
13TH DISTRICT, ILLINOIS

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-1313**

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MODERNIZATION OF CONGRESS

January 21, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write to invite you to visit the site of the 1908 Springfield Race Riot in Illinois. Located in my congressional district, the site and its artifacts were unearthed during construction of the Carpenter Street segment of the Springfield Rail Improvements Project and consists of the remains of five homes that were burned during the 1908 Springfield Race Riot, one of the worst race riots in our nation's history.

As you may know, the 1908 Springfield Race Riot was sparked by a white mob who, after being thwarted in an attempt to lynch two black inmates at the local jail, went on a rampage that ended in the death of at least six, and the destruction of black homes and businesses. During and immediately following the event, nearly 2,000 black residents fled the city and most never returned.

The Race Riot in Springfield demonstrated that racial injustice was not an isolated issue only in the South, but one to be addressed across the nation. In February 1909, and in response to the riots, civil rights leaders formed the National Negro Committee in New York City, New York, which would later become the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the oldest civil rights organization in the world.

I have worked tirelessly with the previous administration, as well as with my colleagues in the House and Senate to designate this site as a national monument in recognition of its significance as a major event in the African American Civil Rights struggle.

On August 20, 2020 the Springfield Race Riot site became the 30th addition to the African American Civil Rights Network, as a result of my request. This is the first time that the site was formally recognized for its national and historic significance in the struggle for civil rights.

Further, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (P.L. 116-260) which was enacted on December 27, 2020 included the language of my bill H.R. 139, the Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument Act, which separately passed the House of Representatives on September 21, 2020. This bill as amended and enacted, directs the Secretary of the Interior to

2004 FOX DRIVE  
CHAMPAIGN, IL 61820  
(217) 403-4690

108 WEST MARKET  
TAYLORVILLE, IL 62568  
(217) 824-5117

15 PROFESSIONAL PARK DRIVE  
MARYVILLE, IL 62062  
(618) 205-8660

2833 SOUTH GRAND AVENUE EAST  
SPRINGFIELD, IL 62703  
(217) 791-6224

104 W NORTH STREET  
NORMAL, IL 61761  
(309) 252-8834

243 S WATER STREET, SUITE 100  
DECATUR, IL 62523  
(217) 791-6224

conduct a study of the area to determine the Site's suitability to be included as a unit of the National Park System.

As our nation continues to experience deep racial tension, now more than ever, this site tells an important story that we must not forget. I look forward to working with you and your Administration and would be proud to welcome you to visit the 13<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. Thank you for your consideration of this invitation and support of the Site's inclusion in the National Park System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Rodney Davis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress